

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0922

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT IC MARR NATO

SUBJECT: ICELAND'S NATIONAL ELECTION: THE LATEST ON FORMATION OF
NEW GOVT

REF: REYKJAVIK 918

1. MANEUVERING ON FORMATION OF NEW GOVT CONTINUES WITH FEVERISH
ACTIVITY BY THE LEFTISTS. TALK AROUND TOWN IS THAT INDEPENDENCE
PARTY CHAIRMAN GEIR HALLGRIMSSON IS GOING THROUGH WASTED MOTION
TRYING TO FORM AN IP-LEAD GOVT. IP PARLIAMENT MEMBERS ARE OPENLY
SHOWING INCREASED PESSIMISM.

2. IT APPEARS THAT ALL THE PARTIES ON THE LEFT AND THE SDP ARE
READY TO COMPROMISE THEIR POSITIONS ON THE DEFENSE ISSUE.
INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE SDP WILL SHOVE GYLFI GISLASON AND BJORN
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JONSSON ASIDE AND RALLY AROUND BENEDIKT GRONDAL. SCUTTLEBUTT

HAS IT THAT SDP AND PP ALREADY HAVE AGREED THAT THERE IS NO INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE PROPOSALS ON IDF SUBMITTED TO USG BY FONMIN LAST APRIL AND GRONDAL'S UNARMED CIVILIAN SURVEILLANCE STATION CONCEPT. THIS MEANS THAT THE PP CONCEDED MORE THAN SDP BUT THAT AN ICELANDIZATION PROGRAM WILL HAVE TO COMMENCE AND A PROGRAM TO ENHANCE THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD'S INSHORE PATROL CAPABILITY WILL HAVE TO BE INITIATED.

3. YESTERDAY THE OLL (MAGNUS TORFI OLAFSSON AND KARVEL PALMASON) ISSUED AN OPEN LETTER TO ITS CHAPTERS TO FORGET THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH SDP AND TRY TO AMALGAMATE WITH SDP SO AS TO BE IN A NEW LEFTIST GOVT.

4. NO ONE SEEMS TO DOUBT THAT THE CONFLICT WITHIN THE COMMUNIST PEOPLES PARTY (REFTEL, PARA 5) WILL BE RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF COMPROMISING THEIR HARD LINE POSITION ON THE IDF IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN ANOTHER LEFTIST GOVT.

5. DESPITE THE ABOVE, GEIR HALLGRIMSSON INTENDS TO TAKE AT LEAST TWO WEEKS IN HIS EFFORTS TO FORM A GOVT. HE IS SWITCHING HIS TACTICS FROM THE DEFENSE ISSUE TO THE ECONOMIC ISSUE WITH HOPE OF TRYING TO HIGHLIGHT BLAME ON THE PREVIOUS LEFTIST GOVT FOR THE ECONOMIC MESS.

6. THE STRONG PRO-IDF DEFENSE APPROACH BY THE IP DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN MAY NOW BE HURTING THE PARTY. IP GAVE MANY VOTERS THE IMPRESSION (ERRONEOUS) THAT IT WANTED TO KEEP THE IDF IN ICELAND "FOREVER", WHEREAS THE PP AND SDP GAVE IMPRESSION THAT THE IDF MUST BE REMOVED BUT WHEN CIRCUMSTANCE PERMITTED. MOST ICELANDERS STILL WOULD PREFER TO BE RID OF ALL MILITARY BUT THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN TIMING. EVEN THE 55,000 PETITION-SIGNERS HAVE THE LONG-RANGE AIM OR DREAM OF AN UNARMED ICELAND. THE EMPHASIS IN THE PETITION WAS THAT NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO BE LEFT DEFENSELESS.

7. ICELANDIC POLITICS ARE UNPREDICTABLE AND ANYTHING CAN DEVELOP. THE DEGREE OF PESSIMISM PREVAILING WITHIN THE IP, HOWEVER, IS DISTURBING.

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